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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "PLANS AND PREDICTIONS FOR 1941." Information from Dr. Day Monroe,  
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In less than two days the year 1940 will be gone, and the year '41 will be here. So the time has come for plans and resolutions--for considering how you can arrange better living for your family during the new year. You sit down to budget for the future. You wish you could look ahead to the problems that will be coming up so you can plan wisely.

Unfortunately, no crystal ball has ever been invented that gives a true picture of the future. But economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, studying facts, figures and trends of family living, can give you glimpses of some of the situations farm families are likely to meet during '41. And these glimpses may help you plan.

To begin with, the economists say the war abroad and the defense program at home will probably affect every farm family. The effect may be more income from your farm, or less, depending a good deal on what your farm products are. If you raise meat, poultry, eggs, milk and other dairy products, or some vegetables and fruits for the domestic markets, you may make more during the coming year because these products may bring higher prices. On the other hand, if you have been raising products that have sold mostly to foreign markets, you may not make as much as you have in other years.

You will be wise to provide for one thing as you lay plans for the new year. That one thing is higher prices for most of the articles you buy. Probably operating expenses for the farm will be higher, and farm labor will cost more. Farm



labor will be scarcer next summer with men going into defense industries and the armed forces. Some farm families will be smaller, too, as the defense industries and training camps draw more people away from the farm. Other farm families will have larger incomes as sons and daughters go to work for defense industries nearby.

Farm and city families both will feel the effect of the new taxation programs to help pay for defense. But every American family wants to take part in safeguarding our homes and way of life.

So much for the general picture of '41, as the economists see it. Now let's get down to the particulars on the outlook for farm family living in 1941. Let's consider each item on your household budget.

First is food. From the looks of things now, you won't have to count on spending much more for food in '41 than you have in '40. Most of the staple foods farm families buy probably won't go up much. Foods like bread and grain products, sugars, fats, and dried fruit will cost about the same. But you are likely to pay more for meat and for some fresh fruit.

Now about clothes. You want to know whether it will cost more to dress your family in '41 than in '40. The economists say that depends on the fabrics you use for clothing, and also on whether you buy clothes ready-made, or buy yard goods. Ready-to-wear clothing will probably go up during the coming year. It already has gone up during the past year. As for materials, cotton goods probably won't change much in price during the coming year, though cotton did go up a little during '40. The country has large supplies of cotton on hand. Rayon prices probably won't change much either. Rayon changed very little during the past year. Silk and wool are the two fabrics likely to become more expensive. Silk prices didn't change much in the past year, but they give promise of going up in '41. Wool goods went up in '40 and will continue to go up in '41, because the defense program will call for wool for uniforms, army blankets and so on. You may expect coats, suits and other



woolen garments to go up in price much more than men's cotton shirts, or rayon dresses. As for shoes, they'll probably cost more in '41 than in '40 since our armed forces will need hides and leather products.

From the cost of clothes, let's turn to the cost of lighting and heating the home. Lighting and heating will cost about the same next year as this year, unless you heat your home with coal. Coal may be higher if wages go up in the coal industry. Rates for electricity and telephone will be about the same, too.

Now about the cost of your house and its furnishings. Furniture and furnishings will probably cost more in '41. Lighting fixtures may not go up much in price. And refrigerators probably won't cost as much as the did in '39. (You may remember that refrigerators dropped about 20 percent in the past year.) Radios also cost less in '40 than in '39, and probably won't go up much. But you will be wise to count on the rise in the cost of building materials if you are planning to remodel your home or build a new one. Building materials went up some in the past year, and probably will continue to go up.

Automobiles will cost more during the coming year. You probably know, that the 1941 models displayed in the fall auto shows were 3 to 5 percent higher than the same models the previous year. Tires and tubes will probably go up, too. So may the price of gasoline and petroleum products.

That brings us to the item of taxes in your budget. Probably special defense taxes will be levied on such articles as theatre tickets, cigarettes, toilet articles-- or articles that you might call luxuries rather than necessities. Better make some provision for such tax revision.

That's all the predictions on farm family living in 1941 for today. The economists of the Department of Agriculture studying family living have offered these predictions to help you plan and to help your family have a better and happier new year.

